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The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

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how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could, until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

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A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.